

By Mary Anne Grady Flores

[Please sign and share the Global Petition calling for dropping all charges of the Kings Bay Plowshares, joining 5 distinguished Nobel Laureates signers, including Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Rev. Dr. William Barber, Phyllis Bennis, Medea Benjamin, Dr. Hanan Ashrawi, Oscar Lopez Rivera plus 84 other notables!](#)

NEW YORK – Four members of the Kings Bay Plowshares 7 spoke Sunday before 200 people at Fordham University at the only public gathering they have had since their arrest in April last year. They came to New York for four days of trial preparation before traveling to Georgia for trial in March or April. They face 25 years' imprisonment for their nonviolent symbolic disarmament action at the Kings Bay Naval Base in St. Mary's, Georgia, where about half of the Trident nuclear submarine fleet is based. They spoke to an overflow audience, which included members of different groups of anti-war, environmentalist, and faith communities. Democracy Now! documented the event, to be either aired or posted online, and the renowned journalist Bill Moyers attended the event. Plowshares activists Clare Grady, Martha Hennessy, Patrick O'Neill and Carmen Trotta spoke. They explained how their deeply held beliefs as Catholics, their lives' experiences in intersectional work, and deep study of Daniel Ellsberg's book *The Doomsday Machine: Confessions of a Nuclear Planner* brought them to act against the threat to all life on Earth posed by Trident's omnicidal nuclear weapons.

Frida Berrigan, daughter of 79-year-old co-defendant Elizabeth McAlister and the late Philip Berrigan, moderated the panel discussion. She brought word from her mother who remains in jail until trial rather than post a \$50,000 bond and submit to the onerous conditions of probation. McAlister calls her once a week to check in and sent the message, "We must raise our voices and dismantle the weapons."

Beth Brockman, a member of the defendants' support community, brought a message from Fr. Steve Kelly, S.J., in jail in Georgia not eligible for release on bond because of prior actions. He repeats, "Nukes are not going away by themselves."

Luz Catarineau-Colville, co-defendant Mark Colville's wife, while she couldn't attend shared of her jail visit with Mark this past Feb. 13 with their son. They had driven 16 hours from New Haven to Brunswick, Georgia to have

a
15-minute visit in front of
a
tv screen.

Patrick O'Neill spoke on the Religious Freedom Restoration Act defense which is now being uniquely applied for the first time. He said the legal system is having

a
difficult time dealing with questions of religious opposition to nuclear weapons.

Fordham Professor of Theology Jeannine Hill Fletcher, who had electrified the GA federal court with expert testimony on Catholic social teachings on war and nuclear weapons at an evidentiary hearing in November, hosted the event. The event also featured an excerpt from the film *The Nuns, the Priests and the Bomb*, by Helen Young about previous plowshares actions and trials.